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ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Letter dated 11 December 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to convey the deep concern of the Government and people of Israel following the extensive racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic outbursts which have taken place recently in many countries. The flames set by racists and bigots recall memories of the horrible inferno of Nazism, which consumed the lives of tens of millions from many nations and destroyed a third of the Jewish people.

Recently, there has been a wave of violent manifestations of racism and anti-Semitism. Hate crimes have targeted refugees, asylum-seekers, foreigners and others. In 1990, there were 46 violent attacks against Jews, while in 1991 there were 61 attacks. Thus far in 1992, there have been close to 100 such incidents, in addition to some 250 cases of threats, arson and damage to property. Across Europe, there are currently more than 1,000 organizations with an anti-Semitic orientation.

The Government of Israel, headed by the Prime Minister, Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, discussed the racist and anti-Semitic phenomena at its weekly cabinet meeting on 29 November 1992. The Government then issued a communiqué, which stated, inter alia, that it "strongly condemns" the recent neo-Nazi, racist and anti-Semitic phenomena and "views them with concern and seriousness ... the cabinet will continue to be active in the monitoring of anti-Semitic phenomena everywhere, and in the struggle thereagainst, as needs and circumstances require".

The President of Israel, Mr. Chaim Herzog, has appealed to the leaders and heads of State of a number of countries suggesting the issuance of a joint condemnation of racism and anti-Semitism.

In the Knesset, on 30 November 1992, Mr. Shimon Peres, Israel's Minister for Foreign Affairs, stated that, "so long as such manifestations continue, we cannot rest. We cannot lower our voices. The Government of Israel shall assert in a clear, unapologetic voice our demand to do everything necessary to nip this phenomenon in the bud".

It is the duty of the world to remember the atrocities of the past and not to allow them to cast their ugly shadow upon the future. Nations should enact appropriate legislation and severely punish those who commit acts of racist violence. It is our duty and our mission to condemn this threat without hesitation, and to put an end to it.

I would be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 91.

(Signed) Gad YAACOBI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations